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THE PRINCIPALL ACTS OF THE GENERALL ASSEMBLY,

CONVEENED AT

EDINBURGH,

Upon the laſt VVEDNESDAY of MAY, the 29. of that Moneth, in the year 1644.

EDINBURGH,

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Anno Dom. 1644.

THE GENERALL ASSEMBLY,

At EDINBURGH, 1644.

Mr James Bonnar Moderator.

Die Jovis penult. Maii. Sess. II.

The Letter from the Presbyterie with the Army in England, *to the Generall Assembly.*

RIGHT REVEREND,

HAving the opportunity of the sitting of this Venerable Assembly, we thought our selves obliged to render some accompt of the estate of our Affairs. It hath pleased the Lord to exercise us since our out-coming, with many straits and difficulties, yet in the mids thereof he hath wonderfully upheld and carried us through. The depth of his wisedome hath suspended us for a time from any great action, to make us walk humbly before him, and to keep us in a continuall dependance upon himself: And yet he hath by his own power scattered before us the great Popish Army, and much diminished the number thereof, so that they do not now appeare against us in the Fields; that all may learne to trust in GOD, and not in Man. It was farre from our thoughts and intentions to have come this length at that instant when the course of Divine Providence pointed out our way unto us, which led us on by some long and speedie marches to joyne with my Lord *Fairfax* and his Sonne their Forces. The City of *York*, wherein a swarme of obstinate Papists have taken sanctuary, is blocked up; now and then God favoureth us with successe

in ſome enterpriſes about it, and wee look for more if the time be come which he hath appointed for the deliverance of this People.

Our Soules do abhorre the treacherous attempts of our diſnatured Countrey-men, that have endeavoured to make their native Kingdome a ſeat of Warre, and our bowels within us are moved to think upon the maine miſchiefs, if not tymeouſly prevented, that may follow upon the unnaturall Warres there; like unto theſe under which this Kingdome hath groaned for a long time. We have found none more malicious and cruell againſt us than theſe of our own Nation, and we meaſure thoſe at home, by theſe here; *Curſed be their rage, for it is fierce, and their anger for it is cruell.* The preſent danger calls upon all to lay out of their hands what ever may hinder their haſte, as one Man to come together for ſaving the Vine-yard that the wilde Boares would lay waſte, and taking the Foxes that would deſtroy the Vines. You are, right Reverend, now ſet upon the higheſt Watch-tower, from whence you may diſcover the dangers that threaten on all coaſts, and wee need not put you in minde to give warning to the Watch-men in their ſeverall ſtations; to rouze up the People from their too great ſecurity; to call them to unfeigned Humiliation, and to ſtirre them up to wreſtle with GOD by prayer; that hee would preſerve Truth and Peace at home againſt the machinations of Malignants; that hee would prepare the People here, and make them more fit to embrace the intended Reformation; and that hee would command theſe unnaturall and bloudy Warres to ceaſe, that Religion and Righteouſneſſe may flouriſh through the three Dominions. Praying GOD to ſend upon you the Spirit of truth, who may lead you in all truth. We remaine

Middle-thorp, 20. *Maii* 1644.

Your loving Brethren, The Preſbyterie of the Scottiſh Army in England,

Maſter ROBERT DOUGLAS Moderator in their name.

The

The Petition from the distressed Christians in the North of Ireland.

To the Reverend and Honourable Moderator and remanent Members of the Generall Assembly of *Scotland*, conveened at *Edinburgh* in May 1644.

The humble Petition of the distressed Christians in the North of Ireland.

Humbly sheweth,

THat whereas your former enlarged bounty, and our present overflowing straits would require a gratefull acknowledgement of the one, and a serious representation of the other: Our case is such, as neither can be expected at our hands, being stricken with astonishment, and full of the furie of the Lord. We are these indeed who have seen affliction by the rod of his wrath: So that it were more fit, we had a Cottage in the Wilderneſse amongst the Owles to mourn out our imbittered Spirits, then that by word or writ we should compeere before any of his People: Although you cannot be wearied in wel-doing, yet we shall no way think it strange, if now you shall give over any more care of us; Seeing the Lord hath testified against us, and the Almighty hath afflicted us. Your judgement is with the Lord, and your reward is with God, not onely for your two years visiting and watering a barren vineyard, but also for your zeale and care to have your Reformation spred amongst other oppreſt and borne-down Churches, whereof you have given an ample and famous testimony in sending hither that blesſed League and Covenant which wee much desired and longed for, as by our Petitions to the Church and State of our Native Kingdome is knowne unto you; which hath had a wished and gracious succeſſe by the favour and blessing of God, accompanying the pains of these to whom the tendering thereof was intrusted by you. And we conceiving a chief part of our miserie to consist in our want of opportunitie to joyne our selves with the People of God in the foresaid League; Esteeming our selves rejected of God and unfit to be joyned in any comfortable fellowship in the Gospel with them, when the said League and Covenant was presented to the Regiments; Wee made bold to lay hold upon the opportunity (though afflicted abjects) and cheerfully and unanimously joyned our selves thereunto: That if wee perish in our misery, wee may die a Covenanted People; and, if our miserable life be prolonged, we may finde shelter and

refreshment under the shadow thereof in our fierie trials, confidently expecting from the Lord by our neerer conjunction with you than of before, an accomplishment of what is agreed into the Covenant, which ye bountifully expressed before we were one with you, to your never-dying-commendation. We are nothing shaken in our minds with the odious aspersions of sedition, combination against the King, and overthrow of Municipal Laws, &c. (wherewith our Covenant is branded) nor with the threats of these who should be comfortable to us in our troubles: But are the more encouraged to beleeve that God shall raise up the Tabernacle of *David* that is fallen, and repair the breaches thereof: For, since we Covenanted with God, and united our selves together, our dying Spirits have revived, and we sing like these who have come forth from their Graves, for God hath had mercy on *Jacob*: In testimony whereof he hath opened the bowels of the Churches of *Holland*, who were strangers to us, and yet dear Brethren, and tender Sympathizers with our afflictions and sorrows, who, when these who were left of the Sword were in danger to dye by famine, did plentifully relieve us in our straits, not onely by comfortable encouragements to walk humbly with God, and wait for him who hides his face from the house of *Jacob* for a season; but also by their rich supply in Victuals and others necessar for our relief and comfort, which we humbly desire our Lord to repay seven-fold in their bosome, and become your Supplicants to joyne with us in a gratefull acknowledgement of their singular favours: And upon the heels of these favours you have continued your unparalelled compassions in keeping your forces and enabling them, together with the other Forces, for avenging the cruell murders, and effusion of Christian blood in this Land, notwithstanding of your owne multiplied difficulties. The Lord hath begun to delight into us, and in a day of salvation hath helped us (So happy are the people who are in Covenant with God.) We are these (indeed) who may justly be burnt up for our unfruitfulnesse in the dayes of our plenty, and stubbornesse in the dayes of our affliction, which hath brought us so low, that where we once enjoyed a blessed plenty, we must now beg of the crumbs that fall from your Table: Wee cannot dissemble, but so farre as we can discern our owne hearts, we would preferre the joyfull sound of the Gospel to our much wished Peace and precious lives: But it may be discerned, your Consultations of before have been guided by the Spirit of the Lord; in that when wee twice in our forward hasting desires begged the present loosing and planting of some Ministers amongst us; you judged it more convenient to supply us by turnes; as foreseeing that our Captivity was likely to endure: Our hopes are so far revived, that we trust to see the day when he shall take the Cup of trembling out of our hands, and put it in the hands of them that afflicted us.

And

And therefore, if you account us fellow-partners of the Purchased Inheritance, Yet again suffer our necessitie to plead with you, that as it hath been by the Committee of Bils already advised, that a competent number of Ministers may be gifted to us by your Commission when they shall see the Calling cleared, the same may be granted as a testimony of your confidence, and expectation of our delivery; And in the meane time some others may be sent by turnes to keep in the dying lives of above twenty foure desolate Congregations, who are in danger to perish for want of Vision: And although we do professe, we count not our selves worthy of such favours, yet as we have resolved to dye with the cry of hope in our mouthes to the Lords Throne; So in obedience of the use of the means by him appointed, we stretch out our hearts and our hands to you for help, and have sent our Brother *William Mackenna* Merchant at *Belfast*, to attend what answer it shall please the Lord by you to returne unto

Your distressed Brethren and Supplicants.

Subscribed by very many hands.

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3. *Junii* 1644. *Antemeridiem.* Sess. V.

Act for the present Entrie of the new erected Presbyterie at Biggar.

THe which day anent the Supplication subscribed and given in to the Generall Assembly by the Ministers & ruling Elders of the Kirks of *Biggar*, *Skirling*, *Brochton*, *Glenquhome*, *Kelbocho*, *Culter*, *Lamyngtoun*, *Symontoun*, *Covingtoun*, *Quothquen*, *Welstoun*, and *Dolphingtoun*, making mention, That the Generall Assembly at *Edinburgh* in August 1643. years, by their Act of the date of the twelfth day of the famine moneth and year, did upon good grounds, and after tryall and hearing of all Parties to the full, erect a Presbyterie seat at *Biggar*, to consist of the Kirks above-written; And granted to their Presbyterie full power of jurisdiction and exerceing Discipline, with all other Liberties and Priviledges belonging to any other Presbyterie; but suspended the entrie and possession of this new erected Presbyterie, during the pleasure of the Assembly: And therefore desiring the said Generall Assembly to ordaine and appoint the entrie and possession of the foresaid Presbyterie at *Biggar*, now presently;

And

And to Declare, that it is their pleasure, that the entrie and possession thereof shall be no longer suspended, as the Supplication proports. Which Supplication being read in audience of the Generall Assembly, and thereafter the Commissioners from the Presbyteries of *Lanerk* and *Peebles*, and all others having entresse to oppose the desire foresaid being publickly called, and the saids Commissioners for *Peebles* and *Lanerk* personally present, being at length heard in what they could say or alledge therein: And the said Supplication and desire thereof, with the Alledgeances and Objections made against the samine, being taken to consideration by the Assembly, and they therewith being fully and ripely advised: The Assembly after removing of the Parties, and after consideration of the premisses and voycing of the foresaid desire, Ordaines the entrie and possession of the foresaid Presbyterie of *Biggar*, consisting of the particular Kirks above-mentioned, to begin now presently; And appoints and ordaines all the Ministers and Ruling Elders of the foresaids Kirks above specified, whereof the said Presbyterie consists, to meet and conveene as a Presbyterie, with all conveniencie, at the said Kirk of *Biggar*, which is the Place and Seat of the samine Presbyterie. And the Assembly refers to the Commissioners to be appointed by them for the publick affairs of the Kirk, to determine to what Synod this the said new erected Presbyterie shall be subordinate; As also to prescribe the order and solemnities that shall be necessar for entring and possessing the Ministers and Elders in the said Presbyterie.

Junii 3. 1644. Sess. VI.

Act concerning the Declaration subscribed by the Scottish Lords at Oxford.

THe Generall Assembly having received a Copy of a Declaration, made and subscribed at *Oxford*, sent unto them from the honourable Convention of Estates, and having seriously considered the tenour thereof, doth finde the same to be a perfidious Band and unnaturall confederacy, to bring this Kirk and Kingdome to confusion, and to be full of blasphemies against the late solemne League and Covenant of the three Kingdomes, of vile aspersions of Treason, Rebellion and Sedition, most falsly and impudently imputed to the Estates and the most faithfull and loyall Subjects of these Kingdomes: And seeing it is incumbent to the Assembly to take notice thereof, and to stop the course of these malicious intentions, in so farre as concernes them, Declare that the subscribers of this or the like Declaration or Band, or any that have been accessory to the framing,

framing, or that has been, or shall be accessory to the execution thereof, deserve the highest censure of the Kirk: And therefore gives power to the Commissioners of this Assembly appointed for the publick affairs, to proceed against them to the sentence of Excommunication, unlesse they make humble confession of their offence publickly, in such manner, and in such places as the Commission shall prescribe; Or otherwise to refer the tryall and censure of such Delinquents to Presbyteries or Synods as they shall think convenient. And when the sentence of Excommunication shal be pronounced, discharges Presbyteries or Synods to relaxany from the sentence, without the advice of the Generall Assembly, or their Commissioners, *nisi in extremis*. And in respect of the atrocitie of this Fact, the Assembly in all humility, do seriously recommend to the right honourable the Estates of Parliament to take such course, as the persons that shall be found guilty, may be exemplarly punished, according to the merit of so unnaturall and impious an offence: And that some publick note of ignominie be put upon the Declaration and Band it self, if their Honours shall think it meet.

Act against the Rebells in the North and South.

THe Generall Assembly considering the just sentence pronounced against the principall Actors in that Rebellion in the North and South, by ordinance of the Commissioners of the late Assembly; And finding it most necessary, that such as assisted or joyned with them in that impious and unnaturall Fact, be likewise censured; Therefore ordains Presbyteries and Synods *respectivè*, to proceed against them with the highest Censures of the Kirk, if they give not satisfaction by publick repentance; And when the sentence of Excommunication shall be pronounced, The Assembly discharges the said Judicatories to relax any of them from the sentence, without the advice of the Generall Assembly, or their Commissioners, *nisi in extremis*: To whom also the saids Presbyteries and Synods shall be answerable for their diligence in the premisses as they shall be required. And the Assembly doth humbly recommend to the Honourable Estates of Parliament, to take such course as the Persons that shall be found guilty may be exemplarly punished according to the merit and degree of their offence.

Act against secret disaffecters of the Covenant.

THe Generall Assembly understanding that divers Persons dis-affected to the Nationall Covenant of this Kirk, and to the Solemne League and Covenant of the three Kingdoms, do escape their just censure, either by their private and unconstant abode in any one Congregation, or by secret conveyance of their malignant speeches and practises; Therefore ordains all Ministers to take speciall notice when any such Person shall come within their Paroches, and so soon as they shall know the same, that without delay they cause warn them to appear before the Presbyteries within which their Paroches lyes, or before the Commissioners of this Assembly appointed for publick affairs, as they shall finde most convenient; which warning the Assembly declares shall be a sufficient citation unto them: And als that all Ministers and Elders delate to the saids Judicatories *respective*, every such dis-affected Person, although without their own Paroch, so soon as they shall hear and be informed of them. And the Assembly ordains the saids Commissioners not only to proceed to Tryal & Censure of such disaffected Persons, but also to take a special account of the diligence of Ministers, Elders, and Presbyteries herein *respective*.

Act for sending Ministers to the Armie.

THe Assembly understanding that Ministers are not duly sent forth to the Regiments of the Army, neither such as are sent duly relieved, which neglect falleth out oftimes, by reason of questions among Presbyteries interessed in the Regiments: Therefore for remedy hereof, thinks it convenient that this order be keeped hereafter; That a List be made of three Ministers by the Colonels, or in their absence the chief Officers of every Regiment, with advice & consent of the Presbyterie at the Army, & sent to Presbyteries here, or if the list be of Ministers in divers Presbyteries to the Commissioners of the General Assembly, that they may appoint one out of that list to be sent to the Regiment, to attend them for performing Ministeriall duties 3. Moneths: And that the relief of Ministers already sent or to be sent hereafter shall be in the same manner. And the Assembly ordains Ministers who shall be thus appointed by Presbyteries or the Commissioners of the Assembly *respective*, to repair to the Armie with all diligence, under the paine of suspension: And humbly recommends to the Honourable Estates of Parliament, to provide some way whereby these Ministers may have due and ready payment of their allowance, from the time of their going from their charges here. And it is declared that this order shall be also keeped for sending forth of Ministers to the Regiments in the second expedition.

Renova-

Renovation of the Commission for the Publick affairs of the Kirk.

THe Generall Assembly considering that the Commissioners appointed by the last Assembly upon the ninteenth day of August 1643. years, the last Session thereof to sit at *Edinburgh* for the Publick affairs of the Kirk, have not yet fully perfected that great Work for Unitie of Religion, and Uniformitie of Kirk-Government in his Majesties Dominions; And that now in respect of the present condition of affairs in this Kingdome, their proceedings cannot be examined at this time: Therefore finding it necessar that the said Commission be renewed unto the Commissioners therein mentioned, and to the Persons afternamed now thought fit to be added for the better expediting of the businesse; Do hereby appoint the Persons particularly nominate in the said Commission, *viz.* Masters, *Andrew Ramsay*, *Alexander Henderson*, *Robert Douglas*, *William Colvill*, *William Bennet*, *George Gillespie*, *John Oiswald*, *Mungo Law*, *John Adamson*, *John Sharp*, *James Sharp*, *William Dalgleish*, *David Calderwood*, *Andrew Blackhall*, *James Fleeming*, *Robert Ker*, *John Macghie*, *Oliver Colt*, *Hugh Campbell*, *Adam Penman*, *Richard Dickson*, *Andrew Stevinson*, *John Lawder*, *Robert Blair*, *Samuel Rutherfurd*, *Arthur Mortoun*, *Robert Traill*, *Frederick Carmichael*, *John Smith*, *Patrick Gillespie*, *John Duncan*, *John Hume*, *Robert Knox*, *William Jameson*, *Robert Murray*, *Henry Guthrie*, *James Hamiltoun* in *Dumfreis*, *Bernard Sanderson*, *John Levingstoun*, *James Bonar*, *Evan Camron*, *David Dickson*, *Robert Bailzie*, *James Cuninghame*, *George Young*, *Andrew Affleck*, *David Lindsay*, *Andrew Cant*, *William Douglas*, *Murdo Mackeinzie*, *Coline Mackeinzie*, *John Monroe*, *Walter Stuart* Ministers; *Archbald* Marquesse of *Argyle*, *William* Earle *Marshall*, *John* Earle of *Sutherland*, *Alexander* Earle of *Eglintoun*, *John* Earle of *Cassils*, *Charles* Earle of *Dumfermeling*, *John* Earle of *Lauderdale*, *John* Earle of *Lindsay*, *James* Earle of *Queensberry*, *William* Earle of *Dalhousie*, *Archbald* Lord *Angus*, *James* Vicount of *Dudhope*, *John* Lord *Maitland*, *David* Lord *Elcho*, *John* Lord *Balmerinoch*, *James* Lord *Cowper*, Sir *Patrick Hepburne* of *Waughtoun*, Sir *Archbald Johnstoun* of *Warristoun*, Sir *David Hume* of *Wedderburne*, Sir *Alexander Areskine* of *Dun*, Sir *William Cockburne* of *Langtoun*, Sir *Thomas Ruthven* of *Frieland*, Sir *James Arnot* of *Fernie*, Sir *Walter Riddall* of that Ilk, Sir *Lodovick Houstoun* of that Ilk, Sir *William Carmichael* Fiar of that Ilk, Master *George Douglas* of *Bonjedburgh*, Master *George Winrame* of *Libbertoun*, Laird of *Brodie*, Sir *John Smith*, *James Dennistoun*, Master *Robert Barclay*, *John Rutherfurd*, *William Glendunning*, *John Sempill*, *John Kennedy*, and Master

Alexander Douglas Elders: And also Masters, *David Dalgleish*, *Andrew Bennet*, *John Moncreiff*, *Alexander Carse*, *Thomas Wilkie*, *James Guthrie*, *Henry Levingstoun*, *David Drummond* at *Creiff*, *John Hay* at *Renfrew*, *John Strang*, *Richard Inglis*, *William Falconer*, *John Paterson*, *Gilbert Rosse*, *Richard Maitland*, *George Cumming*, *William Campbel* Ministers, And *William* Earle of *Glancairne*, *William* Earle of *Louthian*, *James* Lord *Murray* of *Gask*, *John* Lord *Yester*, *Robert Maitland*, *Frederick Lyon* of *Brigtoun*, *James Macdowell* of *Garthland*, *David Beton* of *Creich*, Sir *James Stuart* Sheriff of *Bute*, Sir *John Weemes* of *Bogie*, Master *William Sandilands* Tutor of *Torphichin*, *Archbald Sydserfe*, *Laurence Henderson*, *James Stuart*, *Thomas Paterson*, and *Alexander Jaffray* Elders now added by this Assembly, to meet at *Edinburgh* upon the fifth day of this instant moneth of June, and upon the last Wednesday of August next, the last Wednesday of November next, and upon the last Wednesday of February next; and upon any other day, or in any other place they shal think meet: Giving and granting unto them, or any fifteen of them, there being twelve Ministers present, full power and commission to prosecute the said work of unitie in Religion, and uniformitie of Kirk-government in all his Majesties Dominions, and to do and performe all things particularly or generally contained in the said Commission of the preceding Assembly, or in an Act of the said Assembly upon the said 19. day of August, intituled, *A Reference to the Commission anent the Persons designed to repair to the Kingdome of England*, and to treat and determine therin, & in all other matters referred unto them by this Assembly, siclike, and as freely, as if all these were herein expressed, and as the persons nominat in the said former Commission might have done by vertue of the said Act and former Commission at any time by-gone, and with as ample power as any Commission of former Generall Assemblies hath had, or been in use of before, they being alwayes comptable and censurable for their whole proceedings hereintill by the next Generall Assembly.

Renovation of the Commission granted to the Persons appointed to repair to the Kingdome of England.

THe Generall Assembly, finding that the great Work of unity in Religion, and uniformity of Kirk-government in all his Majesties Dominions is not yet perfected, Do therefore renew the Commission granted for that effect by the preceding Assembly, unto the Persons appointed to repair to the Kingdome of *England* upon the 19. day of August 1643. in the last Session thereof, Giving and granting to the Persons

sons therein mentioned, the same power, to do all and every thing particularly or generally contained in the said Commission, in the same manner, and as fully, as if the same were herein expressed, and as they might have done at any time by-gone by vertue of the former Commission.

The Assemblies answer to the Presbyterie with the Armie.

Reverend and loving Brethren in the LORD,

WE received yours of the 17. and 20. of May, and were much refreshed with the knowledge you gave unto us therein, of your sense of our condition here, and of the Lords dealing with your selves there in your straits and difficulties: We rejoyce exceedingly to see you make such a blessed use of the Lords delayes, for your further Humiliation and Dependence upon him: That Sanctuary, your Enemies, and the Enemies of your GOD hath taken, shall not save them: You have found by experience in your marches and maintenance, that events are not ordered by the propositions of men, but by the Providence and purpose of GOD. There is a time for every purpose under Heaven, and the Cup of the *Amorites* must be filled: Which being now full of every abomination, yea of the blood of the Saints, the cry whereof cannot but be heard in Heaven, and answered on Earth, presageth no lesse to us, than that the Lords time of his deliverance of his own, and destruction of his Enemies draweth near.

We are not unsensible of your present estate, and by the Lords grace shall be carefull, both here and with our Congregations at home, to make all take the same to heart. As for our condition here remembred with such pious affection by you, we doubt not but ye have heard what the Lord hath done for us; these happy beginnings of the Lords scattering our unnaturall Enemies in the North, gives us confidence of his assistance in the midst of difficulties against these that assault us in the South: It is nothing with the Lord to help whether with many, or with them that have no power.

The security of this Nation indeed is great, it is our part to blow the Trumpet to give warning to the People, and to rouze them from that fearfull condition which threatneth so much desertion. And to this end we have injoyned a solemne Fast, the causes whereof being more particularly considered by our Commissioners here, will no question be sent unto you, that if the Lord please, you may joyne with us there in that Action.

Wee have set down an order to be kept hereafter, for sending Ministers

Ministers unto the Armie, which the Clerk will send herewith unto you. Now the Lord our GOD, in whose Name his people go forth against his Enemies, help and assist them, and cover their heads in the Day of Battell, and be their Refuge; and blesse your travels and endeavours, for the good of their souls and his own glory.

Edinburgh, 3. June 1644.

Subscribed in name of the Generall Assembly by the Moderator.

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4. *June* 1644. Sess. VII.

The Letter from the Commissioners at London *to the Generall Assembly.*

Right Honourable, Reverend, and Beloved in the LORD,

IT was the earnest desire of our hearts to have come unto you at this time, and to have brought with us the desireable fruits of our weighty imployments and labours, to our common rejoycing in the mids of so many troubles both here and there: but our Lord in his wisedome hath not judged it fitting, that this should be the time of our joyfull harvest, and of bringing our sheaves, to be matter of sacrifice to himself, and of shouting to us. Both Nations as yet doe but go forth weeping and bearing their precious seed; yet are we confident through JESUS CHRIST, that as it is a seed-time, if the Labourers (although other men before us have laboured, and we are entred into their labours) prove faithfull unto the end, the harvest shall come in due time, and in great plenty.

The common Directory for publick Worship in the Kirks of the three Kingdomes is so begun (which we did make known to the Commissioners of the Generall Assembly) that we could not think upon any particular Directory for our own Kirk, and yet is not so far perfected, that wee could present any part thereof unto your view: for although wee have exhibited unto the Grand Committee (which is composed of some of the Members of both Houses, and of the Assembly, with our selves) the materials of the publick Prayers of the Kirk, the method of Preaching, and the order of administration of both Sacraments, and have the Catechisme in hand; yet are they not throughly examined by the Committee, nor at all by the Assembly or Parliament, which we cannot impute to any neglect or unwillingnesse, but to the multiplicity and weight of their affairs, by which they are sore presled, and above their power. The

The Directory for Ordination of Ministers (which upon the extreme exigence of this Kirk was much pressed by the Parliament) is agreed upon by the Committee and Assembly, and some dayes past is presented to both Houses, but hath not yet passed their Vote. The Assembly hath been long in debate about the Officers and Government of the Kirk (concerning which, we offered the two Papers which wee drew up, according to the practice of our own, and other Reformed Kirks, and so neere as we could conceive, to the minde of the Generall Assembly, and did send to the Commissioners of the Generall Assembly) and hath passed many votes about the one & the other, but hath not brought their thoughts to such ripenesse and perfection, that they could think upon the publishing of them, or presenting them to your sight, nor is it in their power to do so, without warrant of Parliament. Your wisedome will consider that they are not a Generall Assembly, but some select Persons, called by Authority to give their advice in matters of Religion, that they walk in a way which hath not been troden by this Nation before this time, that many things seeme new unto them, and cannot obtain their assent, till they see them clearly warranted by the Word of GOD; That matters of the Government of the Kirk have been much controverted here, and the prejudices against Presbyteriall Government are many and great; That the two extremes of Prelacie and Independencie, which latter is the generall claime of all Sects and Sectaries, have prevailed most in this Kirk, and no other thing known by the multitude but the one or the other; That such as look toward the Government of the Reformed Kirks, finde a mighty party within and without opposing them; And that Reformation and Uniformitie must therefore be a work so full of difficulty, that the hand of the most high GOD, which is now begun to be stretched out in this Land, must bring it to passe.

There was also presented to the Assembly, a new Paraphrase of the Psalmes in English Meeter, which was well liked of, and commended by some of the Members of the Assembly; But because we conceived that one Psalme Book in all the three Kingdomes was a point of Uniformity much to be desired, we took the boldnes (although we had no such expresse and particular Commission) to oppose the present allowing thereof, till the Kirk of *Scotland* should be acquainted with it; and therefore have we now sent an essay thereof in some Psalmes. We have also sent another *Specimen* in Print, done by some Ministers of the City. Your wisedome hes to consider, whether it be meet to examine them by your Commissioners there, that their judgements be sent up unto the Assembly here, both about the generall of Uniformity in this point, and about the particular way of effecting it, whether by either of these two, or by any other Paraphrase, or by changing some expressions in the Books now

now in use, which is aymed at by the first of these two.

As we cannot but admire the good hand of GOD in the great things done here already, particularly; That the Covenant (the foundation of the whole Work) is taken, Prelacie and the whole train thereof, extirpated; The Service-Book in many places forsaken, plain and powerfull preaching set up; Many Colledges in *Cambridge* provided with such Ministers, as are most zealous of the best Reformation; Altars removed; The Communion in some places given at the Table with sitting; The great Organs at *Pauls* & of *Peters* in *Westminster* taken down; Images and many other Monuments of Idolatry defaced and abolished; The Chappel-royal at *Whitehal* purged and reformed; & all by Authority in a quiet manner at noon day, without tumult: So have we from so notable experience, joyned with the promises of the Word, sufficient ground of confidence, that GOD will perfect this Work against all opposition, and of encouragement for us all to be faithfull in the Work of GOD, which is carried on by his mighty Hand, that no man can oppose it, but he must be seen fighting against GOD. It is unto us no small matter of comfort, that we have heard of no Minister of the Gospel (except such as the Kirk hath rejected) joyning with the Malignants there, in their ungodly and unnaturall afflicting of that Kingdome, while they are endeavouring the relief of the afflicted in this Kingdome; and we pray and hope, that they may carefully keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and walk worthy both of their holy calling, and of the great Work, which the Lord is working by his own weak servants in Kirk and Policy.

Be pleased to receive a Letter from the Assembly, unto which you will return such an answer as shal seem good unto your wisedome, and withall (which is our humble desire) some word of your thankfull acknowledgement of the respect and favours done by them unto us.

We have at all occasions since our coming hither, acquainted the Commission with our proceedings, and by the help of God, shall be industrious in obeying your directions and theirs, during our abode here, which through the power and blessing of God, bringing the affairs of his own Church to a peaceable and blessed successe, wee wish may be for a short time, and unto which your fervent prayers through Christ may be very effectuall, which therefore is the humble and earnest desire of

Worcester house,
London, May 20.
1644.

Your affectionate fellow-labouring and fellow-feeling Brethren in the Work of the Lord,

Jo. Maitland. *Alex. Henderson. Sam. Rutherfurd. Robert Baillie. George Gillespie.*

The

The Letter from the Synod of Divines in the Kirk of England, *to the Generall Assembly.*

Right Honourable, right Reverend, and dearly beloved Brethren in JESUS CHRIST,

THe blessing and comfort of that inviolable Union which our gracious GOD hath vouchsafed to both Churches and Nations, gave us opportunity the last year, to breath out some of our sighs into your compassionate bosomes: And such have been the soundings of your bowels, as have offered violence to Heaven by your effectuall fervent prayers, and brought many sweet refreshings to our languishing spirits by your pious and comfortable Letters, in answer to ours.

This makes us studious of all means of acknowledging your tender Sympathie, and of laying hold on all opportunities of repairing again to the same streams of consolation: for which end, as we cannot but confesse, that in the midst of those boysterous waves wherein we have been daily tossed, wee have met with many gracious and unexpected encouragements: so we must needs renew our former mournings, & rend our hearts afresh unto you, with greatest instance for all the assistance that your Prayers, Tears, Learning, Piety, and Largenesse of heart can possibly contribute to your poor afflicted and still-conflicting Brethren: And this we the rather beg of you, who, having bin first in the furnace of affliction, and are come out of great tribulation, are meetest to commiserate, and best able to comfort others in any trouble, by the comforts wherewith you your selves have been comforted of GOD.

It was in our desires to have presented to your Venerable Assembly, some of our dearest respects in writing, by that eminently learned & much honored Commissioner of yours, the Lord *Waristoun*: But his departure hence was so sudden to us, & unepected by us, that we could not have time (as his Lordship can inform you) to tender by him such a testimony of our Brotherly and intimate affections, as may in some measure suite with your manifold and most affectionate expressions toward us, when our sighings were many, and our hearts faint: For such hath been your love, that no waters can quench it, and such the undertakings of the whole Kingdome of *Scotland*, through your furtherance, that we already begin to reap the fruits of all that Piety, Prudence, and Valour, which at this day render your Nation worthily renowned in the Christian World; and us, exceedingly straitned and restlesse

leſſe in our ſelves, untill GOD pleaſe to open a way for our endeavours, to make ſome more anſwerable returnes.

Toward this, our thoughts and hopes were to have made, ere now, ſome proceedings of our Aſſembly legible in yours. But ſuch are the continued diſtractions which lye upon our ſpirits, by means of the ſad and bleeding condition of this Kingdome, as have caſt us much behinde our own expectations, and hindred that expedition which the neceſſities of this Nation, and the deſires of our Brethren abroad, do earneſtly call for at our hands.

Sometimes through GODS goodneſſe wee have a proſperous Gale: Sometimes againe, we ſaile like *Paul* and his company, *very ſlowly many dayes*. And even then, when wee draw near *the fair Havens*, ſome contrary Windes put us out into the Deep again. We walk in paths that have hitherto been untrodden by any Aſſembly in this Church: We therefore are inforced to ſpend more time in our inquiries, and in ſeeking of GOD a right way for us, that at length we may put into that high way, the way of holineſſe, wherein Wayfaring men, though fools, ſhall not erre: And we will wait upon our GOD (before whom we have been this Day humbling of our Souls) untill he lead us into all theſe Truths which we ſeek after; and we ſhall labour to be yet more vile in our own eyes, as finding by experience that it is not in man to direct his way.

Thoſe Winds which for a while do trouble the Aire, do withall purge and refine it: And our truſt is that through the moſt wiſe Providence and bleſſing of GOD, the Truth by our ſo long continued agitations, will be better cleared among us, and ſo our ſervice will prove more acceptable to all the Churches of Chriſt, but more eſpecially to you, while we have an intentive eye to our peculiar Proteſtation, and to that publick Sacred Covenant entred into by both the Kingdomes, for Uniformity in all his Majeſties Dominions.

Which Work we carry on (againſt what ever difficulties are caſt in our way) with more eaſe and comfort, by the great ſedulity and ſeaſonable aſſiſtance wee daily receive from your Noble and Reverend Commiſſioners ſitting among us: Their Prudence will (we doubt not) ſufficiently furniſh you with more particular information touching our affairs: And here, we cannot but acknowledge that the aſſidious preſence of theſe our learned and highly-eſteemed Brethren among us, and their free and faithfull contributing of their counſels to us, doe oblige us much to a double duty; the one of Thanks, which we now heartily render to you, for ſending to us ſuch excellent Helpers; the other of Requeſt, which wee earneſtly make for their continuance with us, untill the Work bee brought up to the finiſhing Cubite.

Now, the Great Maſter-Builder (without whoſe Almighty concur-

concurrence, the Builders labour but in vain) accompliſh and perfect all his own glorious Work in your hands, and in ours alſo, to his own Glory, the peace and edification of all the Churches, and the comfort of our ſelves over all our travels and ſufferings.

Weſtminſter, May 17. 1644.

Your moſt affectionate Brethren and ſervants in the LORD, *by the direction, and in the Name of this whole Aſſembly,*

WILLIAM TWISSE, Prolocutor.
CORNELIUS BURGES, Aſſeſſor.
HENRY ROBROUGH, Scriba.
ADONIRAM BYFIELD, Scriba.

The Generall Aſſemblies Anſwer, to the right Reverend the Aſſembly of Divines in the Kirk of England.

Right Honourable, right Reverend, and moſt dearly beloved in our LORD,

WE do thankfully acknowledge your reſpectfull remembrance of us by your Letters at all occaſions; and not a little rejoyce to ſee that happie correſpondence and Chriſtian communion ſo ſweetly entertained amongſt us, which is ſo acceptable in the ſight of the Lord, ſo pleaſant and profitable, eſpecially when kept and entertained betwixt Kirks and Kingdomes about affairs of higheſt and moſt publick concernment and intereſt: We have nothing more in our deſires than to entertain that harmonious correſpondence, that Chriſtian ſympathie and compaſsion, that ſounding and reſounding of bowels, which well beſeemeth Kirks and Nations, united by a ſolemn League and ſacred Covenant, for mutuall endeavours, by all lawfull means, to a further unitie in that Faith once delivered to the Saints, and greater Uniformitie in Divine Worſhip, Diſcipline, and Government, according to the Paterne.

The caſe and condition of your bleeding Kingdome is no leſſe ſenſible to us, than if our ſelves were in affliction with you; but we truſt all is working to your beſt, & to our Lords glory: That ſome of you hes fallen, it is to try you, purge you, and make you white: If the Lord by thoſe means be with that Reformation of his Ordinances, bringing alſo alongſt that other Reformation of hearts

and lives, should it not be welcomed with all joy, although it bee upon the expence of blood and lives? The Lord will turn the bygone rage of Man to his glory & your spiritualgood, the remnant of rage will hee restraine. The Lord delivereth his owne by degrees, *he is with them in trouble, and delivereth them, and honoureth them*; He who hath been sensibly with you hitherto, and upholden you in your trouble, will we trust, yet deliver you, and honour you: The more ye sow in teares, the greater shall be your harvest of peace and joy, when the Lord, according to the dayes wherein he hath afflicted you, and the years wherein yee have seen evill, shall make you glad, and his Work to appeare unto you, and his glory unto your children, and the beautie of the Lord your God to be upon you, and shall establish the work of your hands; yea, even establish the work of your hands.

We should prove both unthankfull to God, and unfaithfull to men, did wee not hold out unto you the Lords gracious and powerfull dealing with us in the like condition, and comfort you with the consolations wherewith wee our selves have been comforted: We were involved in the like difficulties; we had the strong opposition of higheſt Authoritie set over two powerful Kingdoms, beside this of ours; and the unhappy providence of our wickedly-wise and wary Prelates, had done what in them lay, to make the Ministery of this Land sworn Enemies to the intended Reformation: So that we walked in a very wildernesse, in a labyrinth, and as upon deep waters, wherein not onely did our feet lose footing, but also our eyes all discovering or discernning of any ground; yea, wee were ready to lose our selves: Yet the Lord hath graciously rid us, and recovered us out of all these difficulties, and set our feet upon a rock, and ordered our goings. The experience wee have had in our own persons, affoordeth us confidence and hope concerning your affaires; and wee trust this hope shall not be disappointed; it is our duety to hope upon experience, and it is the Lords word and promise, that such an hope shall not be ashamed. It cannot choose but beget confidence in you, when yee shall consider, that ye have seen before your eyes your neighbouring Ship of this Kirk and Kingdome, having (as it were) loosed from your side, in the like or self-same storme, notwithstanding all tossing of windes and waves, yet (*not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts*) to have arrived safe and sound to the Port and Harberie; yea, and to have dared to put out again unto the storm, to contribute her weak endeavours for your help.

We acknowledge your impediments to be great and many; the sufferings of your Brethren, the People of GOD, cannot choose but both damp your spirits, and divide your thoughts: Your walking in an untroden and unknown way, must put you (though never so willing to go on speedily, yet) to take time and leisure to ask for the right way; and ye want not the opposition of some amongst

mongst your selves, to whom notwithstanding we trust the Lord will reveale his truth in his own time. Nevertheless (much honoured and dear Brethren) go on couragiously against the stream of all opposition; every Mountain in the way of *Zerubbabel*, the Lord shall make plain; and as many of you as are perfect, be thus minded, that forgetting the things that are behinde, and looking to the things that are before, you presse hard towards the mark; as having before you, not onely the prize of the high calling and recompence of reward, but also at the end of this race, these two precious Pearls and inestimable Jewels of Truth & Unity, and all the Reformed Churches beholding and looking on, not onely as witnesses, but also being ready to congratulate and embrace you.

We were greatly refreshed to hear by Letters from our Commissioners there with you, and by a more particular relation from the Lord *Warristoun* now with us, of your praise-worthy proceedings, and of the great good things the Lord hath wrought among you, and for you: Shall it seem a small thing in our eyes, that the Covenant (the foundation of the whole Work) is taken? That that Antichristian Prelacy with all the traine thereof is extirpate? That the door of a right entrie unto faithful Shepherds is opened; many corruptions, as Altars, Images, and other Monuments of Idolatry and Superstition removed, defaced and abolished; the Service-Book in many places forsaken, and plaine and powerfull preaching set up; the great Organs at *Pauls* and *Peters* taken down; That the Royal Chappell is purged and reformed, Sacraments sincerely administrate, and according to the paterne in the Mount; That your Colledges, the Seminaries of your Kirk, are planted with able and sincere Professors? That the good hand of GOD hath called and kept together so many pious, grave, and learned Divines for so long a time, and disposed their hearts to search his Truth by their frequent Humiliations, continuall Prayers, and learned and peaceable debates? Should not all and each one of these stir up our souls to blesse the Lord, and render both you and us confident, that he who hath begun the good Work, will perfect it, and put the Cope-stone upon it; That the beauty of a perfected Worke may shine to all Nations, and we may say and shout, *Grace, Grace, unto it*; that the time may be when full liberty and leasure shall be to all the Builders of the House of GOD, to give themselves with both their hands to the building up and edifyng the people of GOD in these things that belong to life and Godlinesse, to the making of them wise to salvation, & throughly furnished to every good work, & when the Lord shall delight to dwell more familiarly, and to work more powerfully in, and by his throughly purified ordinances? That you afflicted and tossed with tempests and not comforted, shall have your stones laid with fair Colours, your foundations with Saphires, your Children shall be taught of GOD, and shall have great

great peace, and no Weapon framed againſt you ſhall proſper, and every tongue that riſeth againſt you in Judgement ſhall bee condemned; That the Lord will awake as in the ancient dayes, as in the generation of old; That the Redeemed of the Lord ſhall come unto Zion with ſinging, and ſorrow and mourning ſhall flee away.

And as we are confident that the Lord who heareth Prayer, and hath promiſed to guide his ſervants into all truth, will bring your labours to a comfortable concluſion: So do all the Reformed Kirks, and the Kirk of *Scotland* above all others extreamly long for the taſte of the fruits of their pious labours and continual pains: And ſo much the more, that we have ſuſpended ſome materiall determinations amongſt our ſelves, upon expectation of Uniformity; and that in the meane time ſo many ſcandalous Papers come to our view, and to the hands of the People here, for libertie of conſcience, toleration of Sects, and ſuch Practices as are contrary to the Doctrine, Government, and Peace of all the Reformed Kirks. For ſtopping and ſuppreſſing whereof, as wee doubt not, but your Wiſedome, and the Authoritiy of the Honourable Houſes of Parliament will uſe ſome more effectuall means; So do we hope that your Determinations ſhall carry ſuch evidence of Divine Truth, and demonſtration of the Spirit, that thoſe unhappy Clouds of darkneſſe ſhall be ſo ſcattered, that they ſhall be no more gathered nor appear hereafter, to the diſhonour of God, the prejudice of his Truth, and the ſcandalizing of ſo many Souls for which Chriſt hath dyed.

We doe with hearty thankfulneſſe reſent all the kindneſſe and reſpect you have ſhown to our Commiſſioners, and your high eſteeme of them in love for the Works ſake; Although their preſence here would be very comfortable unto us, very ſteedable to the publick, and neceſſar in reſpect of their great and important particular charges and Stations; yet do we willingly diſpenſe with all, yea nothing ſhall be too dear unto us, ſo that this Work be finiſhed with joy, and *Jeruſalem made the glory and praiſe of the whole Earth: Becauſe of the houſe of the Lord our God, we will ſeek her good: For our Brethren and Companions ſake, we will now ſay, Peace be within her Walls, proſperity within her Palaces.*

Edinburgh 4. June 1644.

Subſcribed in name of the Generall Aſſembly of the Kirk of Scotland, *by the Moderator of the Aſſembly.*

The

The Assemblies answer to their Commissioners at London.

Reverend and Beloved Brethren,

IT would have been the rejoycing of our hearts, and the lightning of our countenances, to have seen your faces, and injoyed your presence here with us, especially, should yee have arrived unto us loaden with the spoils of Antichrist, the Trophees of the Kirk of Christ, and the long longed-for fruits of your painfull labours: But seeing it hath pleased the Lord whose Interest in the businesse is main and principall otherwise to dispose, it doth become us with all humility to submit to his good pleasure, with faith and patience to attend his leasure, for *he that beleeveth maketh not haste*, and with more frequency and fervencie in prayer seek to him who will be sought for these things, and having *begun the good work will perfect it*, and double the benefit by bestowing it in a more seasonable time unto us.

We have not been a little refreshed with your Letters sent unto us and the Commissioners of the preceding Assembly; and with these from the Reverend Synod of Divines, the answer whereof you will be pleased to present unto them: By all which, and more particularly by a full Relation from the Lord *Warristoun* a faithfull witnesse and a fellow-labourer with you there, we see and acknowledge that by the Lords blessing, the Progresse of the Work is already more than we can overtake in the course of our thankfulnesse, that your labours are very great, your pains uncessant, your thoughts of heart many, that ye endure the heat of the day; but being confident of your patient continuance in wel-doing, and that your labours shall not be in vaine in the Lord, wee have renewed your Commission, and returned the Lord *Warristoun* unto you, according to your desire, that ye may prosecute that great Work which the Lord hath blessed so farre in your hands.

When the Ordination and entry of Ministers shall be conformable to the Ordinance of God, there is to be expected a richer blessing shall be powred out from above, both of furniture and assistance upon themselves, and of successe upon their labours; for which end as our earnest desire is, that the Directory for it may be established; so doe we exceedingly long to see the common Directory for worship perfected, which, may prove an happy meane of that wished for Uniformity in the Kirks of the three Kingdomes, shall (we trust) direct by all Rocks of offence and occasions of stumbling, and shall remove all these corruptions where-

wherewith the Lords sacrifice and service hath been defiled.

That point concerning a change of the Paraphrase of the Psalmes in Meeter, we have referred to the Commissioners here, whose power and Commission granted by the preceding Assembly, we have renewed and continued.

That there be difficulties concerning Kirk-Government, wee think it not strange for these reasons you lay out before us; yet because the minds of men are still in suspense upon the successe of the determination of that Reverend Assembly on the one hand, and upon the successe of the Warre on the other; which doth not a little faint their hearts and feeble their hands, both you and we must be instant with God and man for a finall determination of all these debates, and a happy and speedy conclusion of this great affaire, so much concerning his own glory and the good of his Kirk. *Now the Lord lead you in all truth, and give you understanding in all things.*

Edinburgh 4. June 1644.

Subscribed in name of the Generall Assembly by the Moderator.

The Assemblies Letter to the Kirks in the Netherlands.

Fratres in Domino plurimùm colendi,

QUæ anno superiore Ecclesiarum Zelandicarum nomine, missæ sunt ad nos Literæ, ut eas communis totius Ecclesiæ vestræ Belgicæ voluntatis testes fuisse interpretaremur, effecit benevolentia vestra tot tantisque officiis nobis spectata: quam sententiam nobis confirmârunt ea quæ copiosè clarissimus Eques D. Archibaldus Jonstonus Varistonus *in foro supremo Judex, à reliquis tum Ordinum tum Ecclesiæ hujus Regni Delegatis* Londino *non ita pridem remissus, in hac ipsa Synodo Nationali de eximio vestro erga nos studio commemoravit: præsertim quanta fide, quàm solicitâ diligentiâ nostram, vel Domini potius nostri Jesu Christi causam, quæ nunc* Londini *agitur, & promoveritis, & promovere etiamnum satagatis. Quo in negotio, ex iis, quorum ab eo recitata audivimus nomina, de propensa reliquorum voluntate & curâ, ut conciliandæ Ecclesiarum Britannicarum unionis fœliciter suscepta consilia, vestrâ ope & operâ prosperum maturè sortiantur exitum, minimè obscura fecimus indicia. Sunt hæc tam illustria benevolentiæ vestræ testimonia, & in omnium bonorum oculis adeo perspicua, ut eorum memoriam nulla unquam delere potuerint oblivia. Laboris autem & jam impensi & porrò suscepti ad controversias in Synodo* Londinensi *suborientes fœliciter expe-*

expediendas & decidendas nequando pœniteat, ex eo quem per divinam jam benedictionem fructum cepistis, optima quæq; in posterum sperare consentaneum est.

Huic tam honorificæ beneficiorum vestrorum commemorationi à D. Varistonio *factæ supervenerunt ex partibus Hiberniæ aquilonaribus Literæ multorum Chirographis subsignatæ; Qui singularis gratiæ in illam Ecclesiam divinitus effusæ, ex quo tempore in societatem fœderis trium unitorum sub Rege nostro Regnorum admissi sunt, mentione facta, hujus inquiunt divinæ benedictionis amplissimum nuper habuimus testimonium, Sanctorum in Belgio liberalitatem eximiam; qui nobis, ignotis licet & peregrinis, fratres se nostri amantissimos, & malorum nostrorum sensu tenerrimo compunctos apertè demonstrârunt. Pauculos enim nos gladio superstites, & fame propediem interituros, omnibus extremis circumventos, in ipso articulo sublevarunt: nec tantum oratione ad consolationem composita nobis animos confirmârunt, hortantes ut humiliter incedentes Deum liberatorem expectemus, qui non nisi ad breve tempus faciem suam à domo* Jacob *abscondere solet, sed subsidio insuper opulento cùm annonæ, tùm aliarum rerum ad nostram in tantis angustiis relaxationem et solatium necessariarum, copiosè nos refocillârunt. Tantam munificentiam cùm supplices à Deo contendimus, ut septuplam ipsis in sinum rependat, tùm demissè vos etiam atq; etiam rogamus, ut in tanti beneficii agnitione Ecclesiis Belgicis, nobiscum gratias agatis. Hæc illi. In quo quidem officio si illis desimus, in nos pariter & illos graviter peccemus.*

Agnoscimus igitur illustrissimorum & potentissimorum Hollandiæ, Zelandiæ, *aliorumq; Ordinum* Belgicorum *tam eximiam beneficentiam: quibus non conniventibus modo & permittentibus (quod ipsum non vulgare beneficium habendum esset) sed authoribus etiam, modumque & rationem præscribentibus, exemplo quoque præeuntibus, in subsidium fratrum nostrorum* Hibernensium *collecta per Ecclesias facta ad ipsos maturè deportata sit: Agnoscimus piorum in iisdem Ecclesiis* Belgicis *tam expromptam voluntatem & liberalitatem: agnoscimus tantum beneficium non in ipsos magis fratres nostros, quàm in illorum persona in nosmetipsos esse collatum: Vosque (fratres Reverendi) obnixè rogatos volumus ut quemadmodum nos ad omnem grati animi significationem prompti semper erimus, ita quâ vobis potissimum ratione commodum videbitur, illustrissimis & potentissimis Ordinibus nostro nomine gratias agatis: populo autem Christiano curæ vestræ commisso tum publicè universo, tum privatim singulis, ut occasio tulerit, demonstretis quàm honorificè de ipsis sentiamus, & quanti faciamus tam eximiam benevolentiam & charitatem, quâ in Ecclesiarum* Hibernicarum *consolatione viscera nostra refocillaverunt. Quæ autem vestræ fuerint partes, fratres charissimi, quàm pio studio & labore, quàm assiduâ diligentiâ tantæ charitatis semen in segetem & maturam tandem messem provexeritis, cùm nos libentes agnoscimus, tùm res ipsa loquitur, & fructus opimus abundè testatur. Inprimis autem (quod caput est) tantæ gratiæ authorem & largitorem nos unà cum Ec-*

cleſiis Hibernicis *laudamus & celebramus: comprecantes ut in vos uni-*
verſos, in Eccleſias à Domino vobis commiſſas, in illuſtriſsimos Belgii
veſtri Ordines Spiritum ſuum copioſè effundat, ut quemadmodum in
Rep. veſtrâ adverſus hoſtem potentiſsimum defendendâ, & inter tan-
tas bellorum moles indies amplificandâ, in Evangelii luce & veritate
incontaminatâ contra inferorum portas in veſtris Eccleſiis propugnan-
dâ, atque inde latius propagandâ, immenſa Dei vobis excubantis po-
tentia, multiformis ſapientia, & eximia beneficentia, per univerſum ter-
rarum orbem hactenus celebrata eſt; ita bonis omnibus vos deinceps cu-
mulare pergat idem fons omnis bonitatis, ut frementibus religionis &
libertatis veſtræ hoſtibus, ſapientiæ & optimarum artium juxta ac ar-
morum triumphorumque gloriâ inter nobiliſsimas gentes Reſp. veſtra
fœderata quotidie magis emineat, Eccleſia ſacrorum puritate, & cœleſtis
veritatis ſplendore perſpicua refulgeat; eoque proſperè vobis cedant ve-
ſtra prudentiſsima & ſaluberrima conſilia, quibus certiſsimum ad fœli-
citatem publicam compendium vos capeſſere demonſtratis, nec vobis tan-
tum conſulitis, ſed de vicinis etiam Eccleſiis ſoliciti, quâ operâ, quâ con-
ſilio opibuſque veſtris eas ſublevatis & confirmatis omnes, & quaſi de
ſpecula univerſis proſpicientes de periculis imminentibus commonefaci-
tis, & ad ruinam ab hoſtibus doloſè machinatam maturè præcavendam
armatis.

Ergo quod anno ſuperiori, veluti ſigno dato, Reformatas omnes Ec-
cleſias, miſsis ex Zelandia *literis commonuiſtis, ut cum impoſtores,* Jeſu
nomen impudenter ementiti, cæterique Antichriſti ſatellites, quò ſecu-
riùs in populum erroribus Pontificiis faſcinatum graſſari, & puriores
Chriſti Eccleſias funditus extirpare queant, arctiſsimâ conjuratione ſo-
ciati ad impia conſilia patranda ſeſe accinxerunt; Ita Eccleſiæ quoque
Reformatæ ſine mora conſilia in medium alacriter conferant, & animos
ac vires conjungant, ut perniciem ſibi omnibus intentatam in hoſtium
capita retorqueant: ni fecerint, tam pudendæ ignaviæ excuſatione apud
poſteritatem carituri; conſilium non minùs prudens & fidum, quam fœ-
lix & ſalutare libenter & tum agnovimus & nunc ipſo etiam eventu
comprobamus.

Principio autem ad hoc conſequendum neceſſarium videtur, ut ſine
morâ convolemus omnes ad Deum noſtrum clementiſsimum, qui poſt-
quam Eccleſiarum Reformatarum mores minimè reformatos multis an-
nis longanimitate ſuâ pertuliſſet, ferulam primùm, mox etiam gladium
vibratum interminatus, tandem rubentem & madidum ſuorumque ſan-
guine calentem & ſpumantem per regiones plurimas jam diu circum-
tulit; in nos denique reliquos nunc intentat, niſi maturè reſipuerimus,
& de domo ipſius amplius purgandâ, de gratiâ Domini noſtri Jeſu
Chriſti *pluris faciendâ, de cultu Dei ipſiuſque inſtitutis religioſiùs ha-*
bendis, de Sabbatho ejus ſanctificando, à quo nimiùm oculos noſtros a-
vertimus, & de moribus ad pietatis normam componendis magis ſeriò
quàm hactenus à nobis factum eſt, nobiſcum ſtatuentes cum populo Dei
ſub Nehemia, Joſia, *reliquiſque piis Gubernatoribus, religioſo fœ-*
dere percuſſo, tanquam firmiſsimo vinculo Deo obſtricti, nos inter

nos

nos arctius adversus hostes univerimus, ut avertat Deus jam fumantem & capitibus nostris imminentem iram, quam peccata nostra plurima & maxima adversus nos provocarunt & accenderunt.

Non tantum nobis deferimus, nondum eos renovato cum Deo fœdere, & votis nuncupatis dignos edidimus fructus, ut nostrum exemplum vobis proponere libeat: Quod tamen experti sumus, de Dei erga nos gratiâ, quod gratitudo erga Deum, quod gloria ipsius à nobis flagitat, celare non audemus. Quæcunque nostra malè merita sunt in conspectu Dei & hominum, certè ex quo die nos de religioso fœdere cum Deo & inter nos ineundo cogitavimus, à portis inferorum revocari, & rei nostræ omnes in Deum nostrum necessariò conjectæ melius habere cœperunt, & fœliciore hactenus successu processerunt. Quod si de fœderis hujusmodi religiosâ societate coeundâ (quod rerum vestrarum & Religionis in Britannia nostra ex fœdere nuper inito perpurgandæ & stabiliendæ commodo fieri possit) vestræ prudentiæ visum fuerit cogitare, & ex consilio eorum quorum interest statuere, ac cum aliis Reformatis Ecclesiis agere (pro eâ quâ apud omnes valetis gratiâ) ut eandem vobiscum ineant rationem, non dubium est, per Domini ac Dei nostri benignissimi Jesu Christi in Ecclesias suas gratiam, fore, ut non modò, quod certissimum adversus impendentia mala perfugium anno superiore missis ex Zelandia literis denunciastis, Ecclesiæ Reformatæ arctioris societatis vinculo inter se unitæ ad hostium conatus impetusque frangendos corroborentur & confirmentur; sed disjecti etiam lapides Domus Dei per Germaniam ex rudere & cineribus redivivi recolligantur, ac gloriosum Domini nostri Templum ibidem instauretur: & purioris Religionis Professores in istis Ecclesiis, per resipiscentiam ad eum qui percussit eos, reversi, & quod nullis canescat sæculis fœdere, Domino nobiscum coadunati, malis, sub quorum pondere tot annos gemiscunt, tandem subleventur. Qui dies longè optatissimus si per Dei gratiam semel illuxerit; de consiliorum communione inter Reformatarum Ecclesiarum Synodos per Legatos & Literas concilianda iniri possit ratio, per quam Ecclesiæ hostes compescantur, hæreses opprimantur, & schismata resarciantur, pax cum Deo & inter Ecclesias firma conservetur, & gloriosum Dei opus in Evangelio per orbem terrarum propagando, & Antichristi regno abolendo promoveatur. Quod ut optandum, & sperandum, piis & prudentibus vestris meditationibus, ut bonum semen fœcundissimo solo commendamus.

Edinburgi, 4. Junii 1644.

Vestræ Dignitati & Fraternitati addictissimi, Pastores & Seniores Nationalis Synodi Scoticanæ, & nostro omnium nomine ac mandato

JA. BONAR *Moderator.*

DIRECT.

Ecclesiis Dei, quæ sunt in unitis Hollandiæ, Zelandiæ, *aliisque fœderati* Belgii *Provinciis.*

Ordinance concerning Bursars.

THe Assembly understanding that the Overture for maintaining Bursars, in the Assembly holden in the year 1641. upon the 7. of August, Sess. 15. is never yet put in practice: Do therefore Ordain Presbyteries to put the same in practice with all diligence, and to make account thereof to the next Assembly.

Ordinance for up-lifting and imploying Penalties contained in Acts of Parliament, upon pious uses.

THe Assembly understanding that the executing of some laudable Acts of Parliament, made against Non-Communicants and Excommunicate persons, and of divers other Acts containing pecuniall pains for restraining of Vice, and advancing Piety, is much neglected by the slowness of Presbyteries and Ministers, in seeking Execution thereof: Therefore ordains Presbyteries and Ministers *respective*, to be diligent hereafter by all means, in prosecuting full and exact Execution of all such Acts of Parliament, for lifting the saids Penalties contained in the same, and for faithfull imployment thereof, upon pious uses; and that every Presbyterie report their diligence herein yearly to Generall Assemblies.

An Overture concerning Promises of Marriage made by Minors, to those with whom they have committed Fornication.

FOrsameikle as it is found by experience, that some young men being put to Colledges by their wel-affected Parents, that they may be instructed in the knowledge of Arts and Sciences, to the intent they may bee more able for publick Imployments in the Ecclesiastick and Civill state, that the said Children hes committed Fornication: And the Woman and her friends hes seduced the foresaid Schollers being Minors, to make promise of Marriage to the party with whom they have committed Fornication; And thereupon intends to get the benefite of Marriage with the said young men, not onely without the consent of their Parents, but to their great grief, and to the great appearance of the ruine and overthrow of their estate:

Which

Which may be the case of Noblemen and Gentlemens children, as wel as of these of other estates & degrees within the Kingdom. Wherefore if the Assembly think it expedient, it would be declared that all such promises be made null and of none effect, especially where the maker of the promise is Minor, and not willing to observe the famine, because his Parents will not consent, but oppose and contradict, threatning to make him lose not onely his favour but both blessing and birth-right. This Ordinance shal not onely be very expedient for many good civill causes, but is very consonant and agreeable to the Word of God, and will be very comfortable to many Godly Parents, who otherwise may be disappointed of their pious intentions, and have the comfort they expected, turned to an heavy and grievous crosse.

The Generall Assembly thinks it convenient at this time, to delay any determination in the matter above-written untill the next Assembly, That in the meane time every Presbyterie may take the same to their serious consideration, and report their judgements to the Assembly.

Act concerning dissenting voices in Presbyteries and Synods.

THe Assembly thinks it necessar, if any Member of Presbyteries or Synods shall finde in matters depending before them, that the Moderator shall refuse to put any thing of Importance to voices; Or if they finde any thing carried by plurality of voices to any determination which they conceive to be contrary to the Word of God, the Acts of Assembly, or to the received order of this Kirk; That in either of these cases they urge their dissent to be marked in the Register; And if that be refused, that they protest as they would desire to be free of common censure with the rest: And the Assembly declares the dissenters to be censurable, if their dissent shall be found otherwise nor they conceived.

Act concerning the Election of a Moderator in Provinciall Assemblies.

THe Generall Assembly understanding that some Provinciall Assemblies in choosing their Moderator, tye themselves to these Persons who have been before named and designed in particular Presbyteries, which is against the libertie of the Provinciall Assembly: Therefore discharges Presbyteries to make any such nomination hereafter,

And

And ordain Provincials in their first meeting, to elect their Moderator, and to make their own List for that effect without any such prælimitation.

Act for keeping of the Fast by the Congregations in the Towne where the Assembly holds.

THe Assembly judge it most necessar & comely, seeing the first day of the meeting of Generall Assemblies, is by the laudable practice of this Kirk a day of Fasting and Humiliation, for craving the Lords blessing to that Meeting; That not onely the Members of the Assembly, but that all the Congregations also of the Town where the Assembly holds bee so exercised: And that publick worship be in all the Kirks thereof that day for that effect.

THe Generall Assembly appoints the meeting of the next Assembly, to be upon the last Thursday of May, in the yeer 1645.

Edinburgh

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